

# FIRE IN THE WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE

The wildland urban interface is where forest and development meet. Urban development and land use conversions begin to encroach upon and change public or private forestland seen as rural or as natural areas to the point that natural resource and management benefits are altered. As development spreads further into forested areas, forest landowners must understand the greater risk of fire. Fire in the wildland urban interface can have detrimental effects on individuals, communities, and natural resources, but by educating residents about protective measures and ensuring fire wise development and proper forest management, the risk of wildfires in these areas can be decreased.

## Some Reasons to Plan for Fire Prevention in the Wildland Urban Interface

- Increased development and human presence in the wildland urban interface presents a major challenge in protecting lives, property, and natural resources from destructive forest fires.
- Unplanned siting of development within high fire risk areas can be detrimental to residents, communities, and natural resources.
- The environmental, social, and property losses associated with fire in the wildland urban interface are not easily replaced.
- Planning ahead for emergency response procedures and evacuations can save lives.
- Forest fire management plans and fire wise planning can decrease the risk and damage to property and life from wildfires.

## Tools to Address Fire in the Wildland Urban Interface Across All Elements of Your Comprehensive Plan

- Develop a map identifying fire prone areas within wildland urban interfaces using such information as past histories of fire, density of development, potential fuel sources, and distance to water and emergency services.
- Develop fire education programs and materials for residents within these areas.
- Apply for fire prevention grants, such as the Department of Natural Resource Forest Fire Prevention and Voluntary Fire Assistance Grants.
- Ensure response and evacuation plans and the resources needed to fight fires are in place to quickly respond to a forest fire.



For more planning tools go to the  
***Smart Forestry for Smart Growth  
Planner's Toolbox***  
on the web at



<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/forestry/SmartForestry>